

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: REGIONWIDE

County: MULTIPLE COUNTIES

Applicant: SIERRA-CASCADE LAND TRUST COUNCIL

Project Title: SIERRA-CASCADE FOOTHILL REGION CONSERVATION PLAN

Reference Number: SNC 070285

PROJECT SCOPE

The project proposed is a collaborative project to identify, summarize, and synthesize new and existing research, maps, and studies of important natural resources with an emphasis on water, climate change data, and conservation opportunities in the Sierra Nevada Region.

The resulting Plan will:

- Place emphasis on protecting riparian corridors and water resources in the foothills;
- Include lands in the 500-3000 foot elevation that primarily includes oak savanna, foothill hardwood woodlands, foothill chaparral, and foothill riparian habitats;
- Analyze aerial photography for areas lacking plans with an ultimate goal of identifying important natural areas and recognizing missing linkages of conserved lands the region;
- Inform and guide land trusts and planners in their strategic land and water conservation efforts.

A progress report will be submitted six (6) months and a final report submitted twelve (12) months following the approval of the agreement. Each progress report shall include but not be limited to:

- A summary of work completed during the reporting period;
- A statement of tasks or milestones and a report on the status of each, including public and agency meetings and other partnerships;
- A statement of any challenges or opportunities encountered in accomplishing the scope of work;
- An assessment of deliverables or outcomes as compared to the timeline in the Project Schedule;
- A comparison of actual versus budgeted costs to date; and
- Copies of any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this agreement.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Catalog, summarize, select and synthesize the conservation plans, maps and reports that have been identified, prepared (or are in progress) for the Sierra-Cascade Foothill Region.	April – June 2008
Identify political, economic and social conditions in the Foothill Region that affect prospects for effective landscape scale conservation.	April – May 2008
Identify the overarching Foothill Region conservation priorities.	May – June 2008
Identify changes in land use resulting from development pressures.	June – August 2008
Identify modifications and adaptations necessary to plan for river corridor, wetland, oak woodland and grassland conservation	September – October 2008

Submit 6 month progress report to SNC	October 31, 2008
Compile findings and recommendations into draft plan, review and edit plan, print report and maps	October 2008 – February 2009
Final Report/Final Payment Request	March 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project Administration	\$15,775
Consultants: Biologists, botanist, marketing research specialists	\$50,900
Mapping: GreenInfo Networks	\$10,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$76,675

Letters of Support:

- None received

Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of this grant application in the amount of \$76,675.

(SNC 070285 SCLTC Sierra-Cascade Foothill Region Conservation Plan)

Project Summary:

The Sierra-Cascade Foothill Region Conservation Plan (the Plan), proposed by the Sierra-Cascade Land Trust Council (SCLTC), would be a collaborative project to identify, summarize and synthesize new and existing research, maps and studies of important natural resources, climate change data and conservation opportunities in the region. The Plan will consider lands from between approximately 500 to 3000 foot elevation, a band that primarily includes oak savanna, foothill hardwood woodlands, and foothill chaparral and foothill riparian habitats. We would also study aerial photography for areas lacking plans, with an ultimate goal of recognizing missing linkages of conserved lands. SCLTC envisions that, once completed, the Plan would help land trusts prioritize increased land and water conservation efforts. It would also provide the basis for a funding initiative to focus foundation attention on the critical need for increased land conservation in the foothill region.

The project would engage more than a dozen land trusts and land conservation groups, as well as scholars and scientists working in the Sierra Nevada/California Cascade foothill regions (the Region), with the Geographical Information System (GIS) and mapping support of Green Info Network in this project.

Scientists, land trusts and watershed groups have prepared reports, plans or maps in recent years that have evaluated some aspect of climate change, natural resources and conservation opportunities. University professors have done extensive research in our region but once their work is completed, the reports are not widely disseminated outside the academic community. Many of these plans have thoughtful, well-reasoned recommendations for conservation actions within their respective study areas. None of them, however, address the entire foothill area in a comprehensive manner. The size of this Region and the number and variety of existing plans make it difficult for land trusts and land use decision-makers to see the “big picture,” and to understand from a regional perspective what the high-priority natural resources are, what factors are affecting their future viability, and what can be done to conserve them at a meaningful scale.

Once summarized and integrated, these data would present a wider perspective that is needed now to provide a defensible basis for implementing comprehensive regional conservation programs to address the many complex and competing conservation opportunities in the foothill region. An added benefit of the proposed Plan would be to encourage larger-scale, collaborative conservation projects between neighboring land trusts and other interested partners. Also, the summaries of existing information would be much more accessible and useful to land use planners and decision-makers in the Region.

If we are to have a meaningful impact on prioritizing land and water conservation in the Region, we have a very tight time-line. The average age of our region’s major landowners (ranch and timber owners) is around 62. As many landowners retire within the next 5-7 years, large tracts of land could be sold or transferred to new owners with plans for different land uses.

The Plan’s focus is to assess the overall conservation resources of the region and highlight missing linkages of lands that will preserve the biodiversity of the Sierra foothills. The total cost

of the project is \$107,825. SCLTC has already secured \$25,000 from the Resources Law Legacy Foundation and in-kind commitments of \$6,150. The total grant request from SNC is \$76,700.